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FLOOR DEBATE

March 24, 2005      LR 12

Board committee amendments pending.      (AM0721, Legislative Journal page 785.)

SENATOR CUDABACK:      Thank you, Mr. Clerk.      Senator Schimek, you're recognized to open on LR 12CA.

SENATOR SCHIMEK:      Yes, thank you, Mr. President and members. The bill is very simple as far as explanation is concerned. LR 12CA simply raises legislative salaries from \$12,000 a year to \$24,000 a year. And I would like for you to take a look at the yellow sheets that have just been distributed to you, to look a little bit about the history of legislative salaries. And you will see clear back into the Unicameral (sic) days, and in 1884, legislative salary of \$300 was put on the ballot, and that actually passed. In '86, \$5 per day passed. In 1912, \$600 a day (sic) passed. And then in 1934, of course, we had the creation of the Unicameral Legislature. In 1990...or 1950, I want to particularly call this one to your attention. The majority voted against this ballot provision, and it was compensation would be provided by law. And I don't know for sure if that provided an exact amount or not, but it did...would have allowed for the compensation be decided by the Legislature in future years. In '52, a majority voted for a salary increase. And in '58, they voted against; '60, voted for. And in '68, mid-term salary increases and an increase in salaries were both voted for. And then in '72, once again there was a provision to set salary by law, and again that failed. And then if you look at the next four ballot issues, it was pretty discouraging, I think. The majority voted against, four times in a row. And then finally in 1988, after it would have been 20 years, the citizens of this state finally granted an increase in legislative salary, and it increased it from \$400 to \$1,000. Now I think that we may have been a little negligent over the past few years in not putting anything on the ballot for people to look at, because if we chose to put a ballot issue on next year, and it passes, it will have been 18 years, and there's been nothing intervening for the voters to look at. So I wanted you to see that. Then the second thing I wanted you to see, so that we can discuss this, is the second sheet that was the white sheet, from the National Conference of State Legislatures. And I would like to call your attention to the salaries, not only